

B O R O U G H O F B E C C L E S

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
AND THE SANITARY INSPECTOR
FOR THE YEAR 1952.



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MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

J. B. KERSHAW, M.B., M.R.C.S.,
D.P.H.

SANITARY INSPECTOR

E. H. CRANMER, M.R.San.I.,
M.S.I.A.

SHORTHAND TYPIST
(PART TIME)

MISS RITA F. PIPE.

RODENT OPERATOR

W. E. TUBBY.

Municipal Offices,
Blyburgate,
Beccles,
Suffolk.

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B O R O U G H O F B E C C L E S

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
FOR 1952

To the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of the Borough
of Beccles.

Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the
year 1952.

Public Health or Preventive Medicine is generally
recognised as embracing two main branches -

- (a) Environmental Hygiene
- (b) Personal Health Services.

(a) Environmental Hygiene is directly the responsibility of the Local Authority. It concerns itself with everything which contributes to clean healthy surroundings free from disease and infection. It thereby involves the Borough Engineer and Surveyor's Department in sewage disposal, collection and disposal of house refuse, street cleansing and lighting and care and upkeep of parks and open spaces. It is also a function of the Housing Department in the difficult task of providing adequate and suitable accommodation for a wide variety of families. It involves the public health department - chiefly through the Sanitary Inspector - in the matter of house repairs, abatement of nuisances, cleanliness of foods, disinfection of premises, disinfestation of persons and premises, destruction of rats and mice, prevention of atmospheric pollution, purity of water supply, etc.

(b) Personal Health Services are the responsibility of the County Council and include Welfare Services, maternity and child welfare, domiciliary nursing, school health, mental health, etc.

ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE

The Sanitary Inspector's Report shows considerable progress during 1952 in connection with the main items mentioned above. The big need of the town is a new and efficient sewage works. By far the most difficult function mentioned is that of housing. The achievement of Beccles in the provision of new houses is well-known outside the Borough. Unfortunately the success is difficult to express in the vital statistics which reflect physical health.

However, there is no doubt that the commonest illnesses today are psychological illnesses and many of these psychological illnesses are caused by the worry, anxiety, annoyance and frustration of living under difficult or overcrowded conditions. It may therefore be safely assumed that the large number of new houses built in Beccles since the second World War have indirectly prevented a large amount of psychological illness. Amongst the other items it should be noted that the main water supply has been further extended.

THE VITAL AND OTHER STATISTICS

These figures, as already stated, represent the physical health of Beccles. I must repeat the warning of last year, viz., that it is more important to consider the actual "figures" than the conventional "rates" which can be misleading when applied to small populations. It is noteworthy that there has been a considerable increase in the number of births. There have also been fewer deaths. There may be a diminution in the trend of recent years whereby the proportion of older persons was increasing.

There was no outbreak of serious infectious disease during 1952 and, in spite of the visit of the Mass Radiography Unit, there has been no great increase in the number of cases of tuberculosis on the register.

Taken as a whole, the statistics are quite satisfactory for 1952.

GENERAL STATISTICS

Area	2017 acres
Registrar General's estimate of population (mid 1952)	6903
No. of inhabited houses	2927
Rateable Value	£40,971.
Sum represented by penny rate	£170. 14s. 3d.

VITAL STATISTICS

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
Live Births	51	48	99
(Illegitimate Births)	(3)	(2)	(5)

Birth Rate per 1,000 population = 14.3
 Rate per 1,000 population
 (England and Wales) = 15.3

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
Still-births (Legitimate)	2	-	2
(Illegitimate)	-	-	-

Rate per 1,000 live births = 20.2
 Rate per 1,000 population = .28
 Rate per 1,000 population
 (England and Wales) = .35

Maternal Mortality - Nil

Infantile Mortality

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
(Deaths of Infants under one year old)			
Legitimate	1	2	3
Illegitimate	-	-	-

This gives an Infantile Mortality Rate of 30.3 per 1,000 live births (England and Wales 27.6).

<u>Deaths</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
	40	52	92

Death Rate per 1,000 estimated population = 13.4
(England and Wales 11.3)

Causes of Death

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Tuberculosis (Respiratory)	0	2
Malignant disease of stomach	1	1
Malignant disease of breast	0	2
Malignant disease of uterus	0	1
Other malignant disease	3	6
Lesions of blood vessels of the nervous system	4	7
Disease of blood vessels of the heart (angina)	4	2
Other heart disease	16	17
Other disease of blood vessels	0	1
Influenza	0	1
Pneumonia	1	1
Bronchitis	1	1
Other disease of respiratory system	0	1
Ulcer of stomach or duodenum	2	0
Digestive diseases	0	2
Congenital malformations	1	1
Other defined and ill-defined diseases	3	6
Accidents	4	0
	<u>40</u>	<u>52</u>

Comparative Table for the Past Five Years

	England & Wales	London	Beccles				
	<u>1952</u>	<u>1952</u>	<u>1952</u>	<u>1951</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1949</u>	<u>1948</u>
Population			6903	6829	6862	6791	6752
Births			99	78	79	101	108
Birth Rate per 1,000	15.3	17.6	14.3	11.4	11.6	14.8	15.9
Deaths			92	108	88	104	90
Death Rate per 1,000	11.3	12.6	13.4	15.8	12.9	15.3	13.3
Infant Deaths			3	1	2	6	4
Infant Mortality Rate	27.6	23.8	30.3	12.8	25.3	59.4	37.0

The responsibility for the treatment service provided for tuberculosis is in the hands of the East Anglian Regional Hospital Board. The local Chest Clinic to which patients are referred by their family doctor is held at Lowestoft. Domiciliary visits for the purpose of follow-up of patients and contacts are carried out by the East Suffolk County Council's health visitors.

In December, 1952 the East Anglian Regional Hospital Board Mass Radiography Unit visited Beccles. During the period 8th to 18th December, 1952 employees of Beccles firms, school-children and members of the general public from the Borough and surrounding district were X-Rayed. The following results have been given by the Director of the unit.

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
No. of Miniature X-ray Examinations	1008	853	1861
No. of Cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis found:-			
(a) Active Cases	2	-	2
(b) Cases requiring observation at Chest Clinic	6	-	6
(c) Inactive lesions	1	-	1
(d) Previously diagnosed cases	3	-	3

With modern and more efficient methods of diagnosis, cases are being diagnosed earlier, and cases which might have escaped notice are being discovered. This means that there may be an apparent increase in the number of cases of tuberculosis in the community, but, on the other hand, the new drugs such as streptomycin and para-amino-salicylic acid have considerably increased the chance of a complete and permanent cure for those patients who are diagnosed at a sufficiently early stage. Two main methods of ensuring early diagnosis of hitherto unsuspected cases of tuberculosis in the community are:-

- (1) examination of contacts of known cases
- (2) mass radiography.

In the past, tuberculosis has been regarded as a disease associated with overcrowding and poverty. By improving housing conditions as a whole local authorities are reducing the means whereby tuberculosis is spread.

Non-pulmonary tuberculosis is largely attributable to milk infected with the tubercle bacillus. There is still a large amount of disease of this type. It is known that efficient heat treatment will eliminate not only tubercle bacilli but also the many other organisms of the group of milk-born infections which cause sickness and death. A great deal of unnecessary disease at present endured in this country could be avoided by the introduction of compulsory heat treatment of milk.

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION

In previous annual reports it has been possible to give a percentage figure of immunisations carried out during the year. Unfortunately the Registrar General is no longer able to supply estimates of child populations in County Districts and consequently the percentage of children in the district who have been immunised cannot be given. The following figures have been kindly supplied by the County Medical Officer:-

Diphtheria Immunisation 1952

Number of PRE-SCHOOL children immunised	91
Number of SCHOOL children immunised	12
Number of Re-inforcing (BOOSTER) injections	112

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

The following cases of infectious diseases were notified during the year:-

Measles	7
Acute Pneumonia	1

The arrangements for hospital accommodation are the responsibility of the East Anglian Regional Hospital Board through the Norwich, Lowestoft and Gt. Yarmouth Hospital Management Committee.

FOOD POISONING

No cases of food poisoning were notified during the year.

TUBERCULOSIS

At the beginning of the year the following cases were on the Tuberculosis Register:-

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
Pulmonary	16	6	22
Non-Pulmonary	7	8	15

During the year the following cases were either added to or removed from the Register:-

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
No. of new notifications:-			
Pulmonary	1	4	5
Non-Pulmonary	-	-	-
No. of cases added otherwise:-			
Pulmonary	1	1	2
Non-Pulmonary	-	-	-
No. of cases died:-			
Pulmonary	-	2	2
Non-Pulmonary	-	-	-
No. of cases removed from area:-			
Pulmonary	-	-	-
Non-Pulmonary	1	-	1
No. of cases recovered:-			
Pulmonary	-	1	1
Non-Pulmonary	-	-	-

This leaves the following cases on the Register at the end of the year:-

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
Pulmonary	18	8	26
Non-Pulmonary	6	8	14

MILK

During 1952 the County Sanitary Inspector took samples of milk produced in Beccles.

The following results were obtained:-

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| (a) | Number of samples examined | 2 |
| (b) | Number found to contain tubercle bacilli | 1 |
| (c) | Number found to contain brucella organisms | 0 |

A restriction under the Milk and Dairies Regulations 1949 was already in force on the milk from the herd where the sample positive to tuberculosis was obtained. The order, requiring pasteurisation of the milk before it could be sold for human consumption, remained in force until the herd was cleared by the Divisional Veterinary Officer and the milk itself was free from tuberculosis. Compensation was payable to the dealer under the Regulations, but it must be conceded that it was money "well-spent" as illness was undoubtedly prevented.

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT, 1948, SECTION 47

This section relates to the removal to an institution of persons in need of care and attention who are unwilling to go but for whom it is considered that it is in their best interests that they should be cared for in this way.

No action was necessary during the year. However, one case did occur in which such action might have been necessary. An elderly lady was living alone in an upstairs flat. The cleanliness of the flat left much to be desired. There was no order in the rooms. She herself was irrational, unsteady and suffering from bronchitis. She was so unsteady and clumsy that there was great danger of fire from the upsetting of one of her oil stoves. A hospital bed was available, but, for some considerable time she refused to leave home. Eventually she was persuaded to go voluntarily. In view of the circumstances, it might have been necessary to invoke section 47 of the Act. When such procedure is undertaken, the person concerned must be given seven days' notice and the appropriate institutional accommodation must be available. The synchronisation of these two conditions may be very difficult to achieve.

Should the proportion of old persons in the population increase to any great extent there will be a proportionate increase in this type of problem.

HOME HELPS SERVICE

This service is essentially one of the County Council under the National Health Service Act. In Beccles, however, through the agency of the St. John Committee, there is a local honorary organiser and the service benefits considerably from this means of ensuring a smooth and efficient working. The local organiser, who has a full knowledge of the background of both the "help" and the "home" is in a position to see that the most suitable person available to meet the needs of the case is found.

ANTERIOR POLIOMYELITIS RESEARCH

Under the auspices of the Medical Research Council, Beccles is one of the areas for research into the mode of spread of the disease. The sewers are swabbed at certain fixed points at approximately three-monthly intervals and the swabs are sent to the Central Public Health Laboratory. Research is continuing. Like all research, there is little to show locally at present but the work done in Beccles is only one small link in a long chain of effort in a number of towns and laboratories. It is vital, for the sake of the continuity of the work, that it should still be done in Beccles.

I should like to take this opportunity of thanking the members and staff of the Council for their great courtesy and co-operation during 1952, which was my first year in the Borough.

I am,
Your obedient servant,

J. B. KERSHAW.

Medical Officer of Health.

B O R O U G H O F B E C C L E S

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE

SANITARY INSPECTOR

FOR THE YEAR

1952

His Worship the Mayor, the Chairman and Members of the
Health Committee.

Your Worship, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to present my fourth Annual Report since my appointment in May, 1949 as the Council's Sanitary Inspector and Inspector of Meat and Other Foods.

ACTION TAKEN UNDER THE PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1936

Sewerage and Sewage Disposal

Drainage and Sanitary Accommodation

The majority of the Borough is adequately sewered, but there are some 76 properties not so provided. Most of these are situated in the Pudding Moor and Darby Road areas, the remainder are in isolated positions on the outskirts of the Borough.

There is a probability that the majority of the houses in Darby Road will be sewered in the not-too-distant future, and there are proposals for sewerage Pudding Moor as soon as possible.

The sewage disposal works of the Borough are inadequate and obsolete, and the purity of the effluent must consequently leave much to be desired. The Council have acquired a site for the construction of a new works and it is to be hoped that the discontinuance of what is undoubtedly a grossly unsatisfactory method of carrying out a Public Health function of cardinal importance will not be much longer delayed.

Most of the 76 properties referred to are provided with pail closets emptied by the Council. The existence of this mediaeval sanitation, in some cases in areas of the Borough which are no longer rural in character, continues to be not only offensive aesthetically, but a slur on the Public Health services of the Borough.

The satisfactory collection and disposal of waste matters is surely one of the foundation stones upon which any Public Health organisation is built, and whilst it is regrettable to have to report in such terms on the position in the Borough, it is pleasing to know that the Council are fully alive to the situation, and have done and are doing all in their power to remedy the situation.

The following drainage works were carried out by the owners of property during the year at the request of the Council's representatives:-

Abolition of pail closet, and substitution by water closet	1
Abolition of defective drains, and complete renewal	2
Abolition of defective and disused drains	5
Repair of defective drains	34
Clearance of choked drains	11
Abolition of obsolete gullies and renewal	2
Provision of cap to rodding arm of interceptor	2
Provision of sinks and drainage	4
Provision of drainage to existing sinks	2
Abolition of unsatisfactory sanitary accommodation and renewal	2
Renewal of defective flushing cisterns	2

Storage, Collection and Disposal of House Refuse

Refuse collection and disposal are the responsibility of the Borough Surveyor.

Collection is normally weekly, and disposal is by controlled tipping on the Marsh Estate of the Council.

A careful watch has been kept on the Council's refuse dump, and it has been possible to keep down the nuisance from flies and other insect pests to a minimum.

The possibility of the Council's refuse dump becoming the centre of a major rat infestation has also been borne in mind, and regular inspections and treatments have been carried out. At no time during the year was the tip found to be grossly infested - an improvement indeed on the position in the not so distant past.

Notices were served on the owners of five houses in the Borough requiring the provision of new dust bins, and in each case informal action sufficed to secure compliance.

Public Health Nuisances

Smoke Abatement

The major industries of the Borough have not in the year under review caused a Public Health problem by excessively polluting the atmosphere with smoke, in spite of the difficulty which it is reported sometimes exists in obtaining the type of fuel most suited to their needs, and the Council must consider itself fortunate that this subject merits so little comment.

The Keeping of Animals

The development of the Borough in the post-war years, particularly development by the Council for housing purposes, is tending to change the whole character of some parts from rural to urban. This has meant that places where animals have been kept without causing annoyance for years, are now in close proximity to dwelling houses, and in some cases complaints have been received of nuisance.

One can sympathise with the point of view of the keeper of animals who is not slow to point out that the difficulty is caused by the building of houses near his premises, and that to deprive him of all or part of his livelihood on that account would seem to be unjust. One can also appreciate that in view of the shortage of houses and housing sites, the Council could not agree that all land within distance of a potential nuisance from animals should be sterilised for building purposes.

In a matter such as this, it is quite obviously impossible to give satisfaction to all the interests involved, but for the most part, the opinion of the sanitary authority has been accepted, if grudgingly. One owner of pigs discontinued keeping them during the year, a further owner moved them to a more suitable site and premises, and certain improvements were carried out at four other places at which animals were kept.

Insect Pests

The nuisance which was reported last year from mosquitoes persisted during the summer months. This is inevitable in a Borough which is largely surrounded by marsh land, and is roughly bisected by an open dyke conveying storm and surface water.

Dykes are flashed and kept clear of pools of stagnant water as often and as efficiently as the staff available will permit, and infested areas are sprayed with larvicides and insecticides, but it would be untrue to suggest that it has been possible to do more than to remove the grosser breeding grounds, and to deal with specific complaints as efficiently as possible.

Borough Water Supply

It will be recalled that the Council took over from a private Company responsibility for the provision and supply of water to the Borough in October, 1949.

Since that time, the Council have carried out certain alterations, but the proximity of the bores to the River Waveney is considered to be an undesirable feature of the present Waterworks.

The Council will therefore with adjoining authorities eventually obtain their water from a new source at Barsham, and the present arrangements are likely to be of limited duration.

Thirty three specimens of the Borough water supply, both from source and consumers' taps have been submitted during the year, and demonstrate that bacteriologically the Borough water supply has been beyond reproach. The samples at source were taken before chlorination. Very properly therefore, chlorination has been regarded as an emergency barrier against the possible infection of a pure water supply, and not as a part of the treatment of the water.

Samples have also been submitted for Chemical analysis, a typical report being appended below:-

Cert. No. 117 D.

13th May, 1952.

CERTIFICATE OF ANALYSIS OF WATER

Sample received from Inspector E.H.Cranmer, Municipal Offices,
Beccles, Suffolk.
Marked No. 566 Borough Council Supply, Waterworks, Pudding
Moor 29.4.52.

Appearance when received : Clear.

Reaction: Neutral pH 7.1 Odour Nil
Taste Nil

RESULTS OF CHEMICAL ANALYSIS IN PARTS PER MILLION

Ammoniacal nitrogen	0.05
Albuminoid nitrogen	0.01
Nitrate nitrogen	Nil
Nitrite nitrogen	Nil
Chlorine as chlorides	221

OPINION

This water is of very good organic quality and shows no sign of pollution. It is bright and clear, satisfactory in odour and taste, and quite suitable for drinking purposes.

ERIC C. WOOD

For LINCOLNE SUTTON AND WOOD

The works which have been carried out, combined with an intensified mains flushing, have been successful in eliminating the high iron content of the raw water, which, although in no sense injurious to health, has been the cause of considerable inconvenience in the past.

In the last Annual Report, it was stated that a mains supply was available to the whole of Pudding Moor. It is pleasing to record that this has been followed by the provision of a supply to Darby Road, and a total of twenty-six houses in these areas, formerly provided with well water, now have a mains supply available. Regrettably, as recorded earlier, the absence of sewerage has prevented the provision of sinks and water closets, but the abolition of those supplies of water which have been a source of concern for years is nevertheless a cause for great satisfaction, particularly as some of them were demonstrably unsafe for infant feeding.

There remain twenty-three properties with bore or well water supplies. Most of these are situated on the outskirts of the Borough, where the provision of a piped supply would entail laying very considerable lengths of main for one or two houses.

Bathing Pool

The Council's Bathing Pool, which consists of a fenced-off area of the River Waveney, with no treatment of any kind of the water, has continued to be a source of anxiety, although no reports of illness attributable to the pool were received by the Medical Officer of Health during the year.

The River Waveney is extensively used by cruisers and other boats, both moored and passing, many of which contain closets discharging into the river. Furthermore, some houses adjoining the river, as reported earlier, are not provided with drainage. There can therefore be no doubt that the river is contaminated to varying extents, by waste matters.

This fact which is apparent on the most casual observation, is readily demonstrated scientifically, for not one of the dozens of laboratory specimens submitted from the River in recent years has failed to demonstrate evidence of excremental pollution.

There exists therefore at the Bathing Pool the use of the same stream of water for both the disposal of human waste and a purpose involving the ingestion of the same water. A most dangerous chain of circumstances is thus completed.

The legal control of sources of pollution (which, the Waveney being tidal, was ever a blunt edged and virtually useless weapon) has been removed from the Council by the Rivers (Prevention of Pollution) Act 1951. It must be borne in mind however that though it may be possible in the future to improve the condition of the River, its purity can never be brought up to that demanded of drinking water, and the target of a chlorinated pool, removed from all sources of pollution, must never be obscured.

The Council, whilst fully appreciating the implications of their action, have felt obliged to open the Pool for bathing during the year. If they had not done so, there can be little doubt that children and others would bathe in unobserved parts of the river, possibly with disastrous consequences. Few people therefore, even those so earnestly concerned with Public Health, would presume to criticise the decision. The Council have repeatedly demonstrated their anxiety to construct a new Pool, and responsibility for the continuance of the present grossly unsatisfactory state of affairs cannot fairly be placed upon them.

The water of the Bathing Pool and the river adjoining has been kept under continual observation during the year to safeguard as far as is humanly possible the health of persons using the Pool. No fewer than eighty seven specimens were submitted for bacteriological examination during the year, 68 for salmonella examination, the rest for B.coli estimation.

It may be of interest to record a change in technique as far as the salmonella specimens are concerned. Hitherto specimens of water, which gave a picture of the position at the moment of immersion, have been submitted. During 1952, Moore's swabs were left submerged in the river for a week, and immersed in tetrathionate broth before submission to the laboratory.

It is not claimed that the absence of salmonella in such a specimen indicates the absence of salmonella in the water throughout the week. It must remain something of a "hit and miss" affair, but it is much less so than the more usual sampling method.

Results may be summarised by saying that whilst salmonella was not isolated from the Pool at any time during the year, coliform bacilli was invariably found, ranging from 20 to more than 250 per 100 m.l., and a typical report reads:-

"Bacteriological findings show evidence of gross faecal pollution".

THE PREVENTION OF DAMAGE BY PESTS ACT, 1948

The fulfilment of the Council's responsibility under this Act is under the supervision of the Sanitary Inspector, one Rodent Operator being employed.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries are responsible for nation-wide co-ordination of anti-rodent work, and pay 50% of the Council's expenses in this direction.

Reference was made in the last Annual Report to the great advance which Warfarin represented in the treatment of surface infestations, and experience during the year has confirmed the opinions then expressed. There can be no doubt that the surface population of rats in the Borough is being systematically reduced to very small dimensions, and the large "reservoirs" of rats which formerly existed at certain points in the Borough have been virtually destroyed.

The position in the sewers is not so satisfactory partly because Warfarin cannot with success be used, and partly because many of the sewers and drains in the older parts of the Borough are obsolete and defective. It would appear that they are the key to the rat problem in the centre of the Borough, for experience has shown that infestations in that area can almost invariably be traced, directly or indirectly to defective drains or sewers, in some cases well removed from the infestation.

The sewers of the Borough have been treated at six monthly intervals in accordance with the recommendations of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, and good results have been obtained. In spite of the difficulties outlined, there can be no doubt that the population of rats therein is being systematically reduced.

At the same time defective drains and sewers are being repaired as found. A frequent cause of trouble is the disused drains of properties long since demolished - the difficulties of tracing the drains of properties of which no record exists can readily be imagined.

This aspect of Public Health work is regarded as being of great importance, and it is very gratifying to note the consistent improvement as evidenced by the number of complaints received and the results of routine inspections.

HOUSING ACT, 1936

The Provision of New Houses

The Sanitary Inspector has no direct responsibility for the provision of new houses. A reference thereto is included in this Report however for the subject is so intimately bound up with Public Health that any such Report would be incomplete without it.

During the year 1952 29 houses were provided by the Local Authority, and 14 by private enterprise, making a total of 443 houses erected since the war.

This is indeed a source of gratification to all who are concerned with the Public Health of the Borough, for it is impossible to over-estimate the influence of good housing, not only on the physical well being of the community and the individual.

The Repair of Unfit Houses

References have been made both in the national press and in previous Annual Reports to the ever increasing difficulty of ensuring the adequate repair and maintenance of existing houses, due to the operation of the Rent Restrictions Acts.

There has been no change in the position during the year, and the operation of the sections of the Housing Act dealing with the repair of unfit houses has become progressively more difficult.

It would appear that the repair and maintenance of existing property is quite as important as the erection of new houses, but with tied rents and the ever increasing cost of repairs, it is impossible for many property owners, however willing they may be, to give the attention to their property that they would wish. Some hesitation on the part of Local Authorities in pressing for extensive repairs to property is understandable when it is remembered that the question of "reasonable expense" figures so largely in Housing legislation. Although the term has never been satisfactorily defined, it would not be illogical to presume that the repairs which could be carried out at "reasonable expense" in a property rented at five or six shillings a week would be small indeed.

Great hopes were raised with the passing of the Housing Act 1949, which empowers Local Authorities to make improvement grants in respect of property which is sound, but lacking modern conveniences. The response locally and it would appear nationally, has however been disappointing. No suitable application was received by the Council during the year.

The following works were carried out during the year following the service of informal notices under the Housing Act:-

External

Roofs repaired	12
Chimney stacks repaired	2
Rainwater conduits repaired	3
Brickwork of walls made good	2
Dampness in walls remedied	1

Internal

Walls and ceilings made good	6
Floors renewed	7
Flues repaired	1
Doors and windows repaired	5
Sinks and drainage provided	3
Washing coppers repaired	1
Staircase handrail repaired	1

Demolition of Unfit Houses

In April, 1949, the Council made Demolition Orders under Section 11 of the Housing Act 1936 in respect of thirty three unfit houses in the Borough.

The position at the end of 1952 was as follows:-

Houses demolished	12
Vacant, and notices served requiring demolition	3
Vacant, but demolition not practicable, as integrated with existing houses	7
Still occupied	10

A further three vacant and derelict houses were demolished as a result of informal action on behalf of the Council.

It must be admitted that this is a disappointing rate of progress, due, of course, to the even more pressing needs of families without a home of any kind, or living in even more primitive conditions in hutments.

It has furthermore prevented the Council from expanding their drive against unfit properties in the Borough, for the making of further Demolition Orders which it was unlikely would be enforced for a very considerable period could only be an embarrassment to the Council.

A survey of properties in the Borough has been carried out, and there are 52 properties which would appear to merit consideration for demolition. It is to be hoped that the efforts which the Council have made to provide new houses will be reflected in a lessening of the waiting list, which will permit a long overdue drive to be made against the properties in the Borough which have outlived their usefulness and are year by year becoming more and more prejudicial to the health of the occupants.

A serious problem which is arising in connection with re-housing is that of Council house rents. All of the properties which are the subject of demolition orders, and all of those deemed suitable for future consideration, are cottage type property rented at about six shillings per week. Council house rents, although subsidised and lower than in most parts of the country, are of course substantially higher.

The primary object of re-housing is to improve the environment of the family re-housed, and surely the term "environment" should embrace not only the structure in which the family is housed, but such things as food, clothing, and even the enjoyment of leisure. One wonders whether the removal of a family from a condemned house to a Council house, whilst improving immeasurably their physical surroundings, does not sometimes in the aggregate actually lessen the possibility of their enjoying a happy and contented life in the fullest sense of the term, by drastically lessening the amount of money available for the other necessities of life of no less importance.

It is needless to say that these remarks are in no way intended to belittle the importance of re-housing. They do however underline a point of view which should be borne in mind, and they are intended as a reminder of the necessity for keeping Council house rents as low as possible, even at the expense of simplifying design and cutting out non-essentials.

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT, 1948

The interment of one person was carried out by the Council during the year in accordance with the responsibility vested in them by the above named Act.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT, 1938

Meat Inspection

The year has been a busy one at the Beccles Slaughterhouse. Slaughtering for the Borough and four adjoining districts has continued to be carried out there, and this has involved the Sanitary Inspector in a considerable amount of work, as may be judged from the following figures of animals slaughtered.

	<u>Cows</u>	<u>Steers & Heifers</u>	<u>Pigs</u>	<u>Sheep</u>	<u>Calves</u>	<u>Total</u>
January	5	29	622	-	42	698
February	31	76	210	116	182	615
March	25	84	313	87	142	651
April	27	172	148	40	34	421
May	18	153	231	69	24	495
June	2	21	43	249	4	319
July	18	194	118	193	4	527
August	23	185	61	277	67	613
September	41	281	46	421	136	925
October	39	157	151	849	391	1,587
November	38	128	167	297	360	990
December	29	87	229	205	296	846
	296	1,567	2,339	2,803	1,682	8,687

Totals for year ended	<u>Cows</u>	<u>Steers & Heifers</u>	<u>Pigs</u>	<u>Sheep</u>	<u>Calves</u>	<u>Total</u>
31/12/1951	290	1,533	972	2,309	1,665	6,769
" 1950	300	1,356	299	3,202	1,707	6,864

Details of animals slaughtered and inspected, and condemnations during 1952 are as follows:-

	Cattle	Calves	Sheep & Lambs	Pigs
Number killed	1,863	1,682	2,803	2,339
Number inspected	1,863	1,682	2,803	2,339
<u>All diseases except Tuberculosis</u>				
Whole carcase condemned	8	10	7	11
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	583	15	179	131
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis	31.7%	1.48%	6.6%	6.07%
<u>Tuberculosis only</u>				
Whole carcasses condemned	24	-	-	16
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	229	-	-	83
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	13.58%	-	-	4.2%

Ministry of Food Slaughterhouse

In 1940, slaughtering throughout the country was centralised in some 600 premises, and was brought under the control of the Ministry of Food, and this virtual "nationalisation" of the slaughtering industry has continued up to and including the year under review. The premises have thus enjoyed "Crown Immunity" and all meat therein is Crown property. The effect of this is that legally, the statutes which it is the duty of District Councils to enforce, both as regards food preparing premises and unsound food, are not applicable. The Government have nevertheless sought the assistance of Local Authorities in the inspection of meat, but legally, the Ministry is not bound to accept the decisions of Local Inspectors.

The Ministry of Food Slaughterhouse was formerly used by a Society whose output was but a fraction of that now obtaining. The great increase in slaughtering brought in its train very real difficulties which were a source of anxiety to the Council, and urgent representations on various matters have been made to the Ministry and the Contractors from time to time. As pointed out earlier the Council could only make representations, without the force of legal backing, and were dependent on the co-operation of the Ministry, which could have been withheld.

The following factual statement of works carried out at the Beccles Slaughterhouse by the Ministry or their Contractors as a result of representations by the Council speaks for itself as to the degree of co-operation which has been forthcoming:-

- (1) Provision of rest and changing room for staff.
- (2) Provision of hot water and washing facilities.
- (3) Provision of additional lairage to prevent animals being kept in open yard whilst awaiting slaughter.
- (4) Provision of gut and tripe cleaning room, to avoid necessity of these operations being carried out in slaughterhouse.
- (5) Provision of louvres in roof and other improvements to natural ventilation.
- (6) Provision of additional artificial ventilation.
- (7) Provision of room for retention of condemned meat and offals.
- (8) Abolition of insanitary manure pit, and provision of bins in place thereof.
- (9) Provision of additional natural and artificial lighting.
- (10) Provision of a "reservoir" of hot water for pig scalding.
- (11) Provision of a slaughtering pen for pigs.
- (12) Provision of readily workable clothing and head-gear for persons employed.
- (13) The separation, as far as is practicable in the existing premises, of the dressing and hanging of carcasses.

It is not suggested that conditions are now ideal. Many difficulties, some of them outside the control of the Ministry and the Council remain.

There is a tendency to look back nostalgically to the pre-war days, and to suggest that all of these difficulties would disappear if a return to numerous small slaughterhouses was permitted. It must be remembered however that there were grave defects in that system. Many slaughterhouses were situated in the worst possible places, involving the driving of cattle through heavily populated districts, and causing gross nuisance and disturbance to persons living in the area. Many premises were primitive in the

extreme, lacking the most rudimentary necessities for the humane slaughter of animals and the satisfactory preparation of food for human consumption. Perhaps the gravest defect was the virtual impossibility of adequately inspecting the meat. With a multiplicity of small premises, slaughtering at all hours of the day and night, adequate meat inspection was in many cases impossible.

Whilst the defects of this centralised slaughtering must be fully acknowledged, it represents in many ways a Public Health advance of first rate importance, and it is earnestly to be hoped that a return to the multiplicity of small pre-war slaughterhouses will never be contemplated.

Other Foods

It was found necessary to condemn the following "other foods" as being unfit for human consumption during the year. In each case, the food was voluntarily surrendered.

Tinned Foods (tins)

Meat

Tinned hams	5
Luncheon meat	25
Ham loaf	7
Beef paste	2
Stewed steak	2

Fish

Salmon	2
Lobster	5
Crab	1
Herrings	1

Vegetables

Beans	45
Peas	14
Carrots	3
Tomatoes	2
Soups	13

Fruit

Plums	15
Grapefruit	4
Oranges	3
Apricots	3
Pineapples	8
Peaches	2
Pears	2
Cherries	1
Strawberries	1
Apples	4
Grapes	1
Gooseberries	1

Miscellaneous

Milk	56
Spaghetti	1
Baby foods	13

Jams etc. (jars)

Marmalade	1
Mincemeat	3
Piccalilli	4

Bacon	13 lb.
Cheese	16 lb.
Biscuits	63 lb.
Processed cheese	22 x 1 lb. boxes

Tinned hams have continued to be an anxiety, in view of their potentialities as a carrier of food poisoning, although not so much so as in previous years.

Food Preparing Premises

There are sixteen premises in the Borough registered with the Council for the manufacture, storage and sale of ice cream. There is only one manufacturer of ice cream, the remainder being provided chiefly by large firms, and delivered and sold pre-packed.

There are eight premises registered for the preparation or manufacture of sausages, or potted, pressed, pickled or preserved food under Section 14 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938.

Routine visits have been paid to these and other food preparing and handling premises, and with minor exceptions, which have been speedily rectified, it is considered that food handling in the Borough is carried out in a seemly and hygienic manner.

FACTORIES ACTS, 1937 and 1948

There are 45 factories with Mechanical Power in the Borough, 63 inspections were made. There are now only two "non-power" factories in the Borough.

No contraventions of the Sections of the Act which it is the duty of the Council to enforce were noted during the year.

The inspection of Factories requiring the issue of a Certificate of Adequate Means of Escape in Case of Fire was completed by the Chief Fire Officer of the Suffolk and Ipswich Fire Service on behalf of the Council. All of his recommendations have now been complied with, and all factories to which the Act applies in this respect have been duly certified.

It is a pleasure indeed to pay tribute to the assistance rendered to the Council in this respect by the Chief Fire Officer.

PETROLEUM (CONSOLIDATION) ACT, 1928

The Sanitary Inspector is the Council's authorised Officer under the above named Act.

During the year, in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer of the Suffolk and Ipswich Fire Service, Conditions of Licence with which all new installations will have to comply, have been laid down.

Inspections of all existing installations have been carried out by the Chief Fire Officer, and the renewal of licences has been conditional upon his recommendations being complied with.

The Council have also required the pressure testing of all tanks used for the storage of petrol at five yearly intervals and all tanks had been or arrangements made for this to be done, at the end of the year.

Thirty licences for the Storage of Petroleum Spirit were issued by the Council during the year.

PET ANIMALS ACT, 1951

The above named Act, which it is the duty of the Council to enforce, became law during the year under review.

Inspector F. Wood, Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, was appointed in an Honorary capacity as the Council's authorised officer under the Act.

Two premises were licensed under the Act, and one application was refused.

It is perhaps to be regretted that the Act contains no provision relating to the keeping of animals given as prizes at for example, fairs. The possibility of making permission to hold fairs in the Borough conditional upon animals not being given as prizes, is being considered.

CONCLUSION

The year 1952, as far as the Public Health Department is concerned, has been a busy one, and in many ways, a not unsatisfactory one.

There has been steady, if unspectacular progress in several directions. Mention may be made for example of the continuance of the Council's housing drive, which has resulted in many families being given the opportunity of a happy and healthy home life. The year has seen the abolition of several polluted supplies of water, and the substitution of the Council's piped supply, the improvement in which has been maintained. The conditions under which meat has been prepared at the slaughterhouse have been and are being consistently bettered, and the safety and wholesomeness of this staple article of diet is consistently improving. The menace to health which rats represent has been diminished.

These are perhaps some of the more important and obvious ways in which progress has been made, but no less important in the aggregate has been the routine, day to day work of the Department. Such matters as the provision of dust bins, the repair of defective properties, the abatement of public health nuisances, are all small but important steps in the right general direction, which individually are perhaps trifling and of benefit to only one family or one individual. Collectively however, and over a period of years, they represent the difference between a healthy and an unhealthy environment. It is surely not an unreasonable corollary that ultimately they are reflected in no small measure in an increased expectation of life, in improved infectious disease records, and improved infantile mortality, and the other yard-sticks by which the health of the community may be measured.

Grateful acknowledgement is made of the advice given by the Council's Medical Officer of Health, Dr. J. B. Kershaw, not only in the preparation of this Report, but throughout the period to which it relates, and warm thanks are expressed to the Town Clerk and all of the other officials of the Borough for their co-operation.

Finally, I would wish to place on record my appreciation of the support which the Chairman and Members of the Health Committee have consistently accorded, and to say what a source of satisfaction it has been to serve them and the ratepayers they represent.

E. H. CRANMER.

Sanitary Inspector.

August, 1953.

